

Shropshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme – responses to consultation (March 2022)

The draft EP Plan and Scheme were put to consultation from 4 February until 4 March 2022. The documents were sent to statutory consultees (as listed within the DfT’s guidance for EPs). Points raised that require addressing by the Shropshire Bus Partnership are set out in the following table, along with any response to those points and action to be taken.

Transport Focus			
	Points raised by consultee	Initial response from Shropshire Bus Partnership	Proposed action
1	The EP should reflect TF’s document ‘What passengers want from BSIPs’	The BSIP ambitions indicate how they address priorities of the National Bus Strategy. The EP seeks to take forward actions that will address deficiencies of the current network.	Reflect the TF document in future updates of the EP documents.
2	Expect to see more clarity and firmer commitments once there is more certainty on funding	As the post-pandemic network settles down and the funding position of the DfT is known, the Bus Partnership will determine the priorities for action and the EP Scheme will be updated and varied accordingly.	Update and vary EP Scheme to reflect those commitments that can be taken forward with certainty.
3	Would like to see a commitment to keeping passengers on board buses informed of delays and disruption.	Charter includes a general commitment about finding out about delays and disruption.	Look to improve on this commitment when the EP and Charter are reviewed.
4	Would like to see the PT website include details of ticket types and fares.	Fares and ticketing information will be included on the website.	Ensure all fares and ticketing information is collated and displayed on the website.
5	Would like to see a commitment to harmonising ages of child fares.	The Partnership accepts that this would be a positive step.	Review and consider the position through future Partnership meetings to gain consensus and agree a way forward.
6	Clarify that payment by cash will be retained.	There is no intention for any operator to remove the ability to pay by cash. The Charter includes a commitment for a range of payment methods.	All operators to maintain the ability for cash payment of fares.
7	Whilst anti-social behaviour might not be a particular issue in Shropshire, it would be useful to include the issue in future public surveys – if nothing else, to demonstrate that it isn’t an issue.	Problems of anti-social behaviour have not been highlighted by operators during the development of the BSIP or EP. It is accepted that the public engagement didn’t specifically cover this issue.	Issue of anti-social behaviour to be included in future engagement exercises.

8	Would be useful to know how the PT website will be promoted.	Intention that the website will be promoted as widely and through as many different channels as possible, including on bus and at stop.	Provide more detail of how the website will be promoted within the next modifications to the EP Scheme.
9	Clarify the position regarding provision of paper timetable information at bus stops and additional fares information at key stops.	It is the Partnership's intention to maintain paper information displays at bus stops.	Provide more detail about future information provision within the next modifications to the EP Scheme.
10	Clarify the extent to which audio-visual information is/will be provided on buses.	The Partnership supports this, but implementation will be dependent on funding and DfT guidance/requirements for its introduction.	Keep the matter under review pending funding/guidance.
11	Passenger Charter could commit to customer service training.	The Partnership supports the principle of customer service training, but dedicated training would depend on funding being available. Some training is included within CPC. However, the charter commitment should be that drivers provide high levels of customer service, rather than they receive training. The Charter does commit that drivers will be friendly, helpful and knowledgeable.	Continue to look for opportunities to introduce customer service training. In the meantime, operators to encourage drivers to provide the best possible customer service.
12	Passenger Charter could commit to a wheelchair space on every bus and provision of alternative transport when a wheelchair space is already in use.	The Charter does commit to the provision of a wheelchair space.	Consider opportunities to go further with the commitment each time the Charter is reviewed.
13	Commit to bus cleaning and maintenance of high standards.	The Charter commits to passengers having a pleasant and comfortable journey. One of the factors influencing this will be the cleanliness of the bus.	Consider opportunities to go further with the commitment each time the Charter is reviewed.
14	Provide more detail on how user representatives (including people with protected characteristics) will be formally consulted as part of the annual reviews of EP. What information will be provided and questions asked?	The Partnership recognises the importance of users' views.	Consider how the BSIP and EP will be reviewed and progress monitored, along with consultation arrangements.
15	Provide clarity on how/when the bespoke variation process will be used and that it will	Whilst the intention of the bespoke process is to enable certain variations to the EP Scheme to be	When the EP Scheme is varied, define the type of variations that will be dealt with

	only be used for relatively minor modifications.	made more easily and speedily, more significant changes or new initiatives would require consultation under current SC practice or the development of new EP Schemes, which would automatically need to go through the operator objection and consultation processes.	using the bespoke process and those that will be subjected to consultation and/or require a new EP Scheme being made.
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Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)			
	Points raised by consultee	Initial response from Bus Partnership	Proposed action
1	CMA not required to provide opinion on whether an EP meets the requirements of Competition Test – authority should satisfy itself that Plan and Scheme are compliant.	Shropshire Council has undertaken a competition test assessment to satisfy itself that there are no adverse impacts on competition.	Variations and new EP Schemes will need to be subjected to further competition tests.
2	Authority needs to consider state of competition based on any new requirements on operators	Shropshire Council has undertaken a competition test assessment to satisfy itself that there are no adverse impacts on competition.	Variations and new EP Schemes will need to be subjected to further competition tests.
3	Ensure that ticketing schemes are compliant with competition law	This will be done as part of the development of any multi-operator/inter-operable ticketing schemes.	Consider this issue at the point where any such ticketing schemes are developed.
4	Care should be taken with refund guarantees, ensuring that these don't deter operators from running services	There is no commitment within the EPS or Charter for refund guarantees.	If any such guarantees are considered in future, suitable care will be taken. Again, such a variation or new scheme would be subject to a competition test assessment.
5	If standard branding/liveries are advocated, operators' brands should be clearly visible. Care needed on cross boundary routes.	Whilst the Partnership is keen to advocate an overall network that is easy to use, it is not intended to have a single brand/identity.	Maintain the position of a network based on operators having their own identities.
6	Care needed on representation of operators, if they don't all have a place on the EP group/board. Where some operators have greater representation, this needs to be	All operators of qualifying services (and the Community Transport Consortium) are able to attend the Partnership meetings and have representation.	Continue the current position where all operators of qualifying services are able to attend Partnership meetings in their own right.

	based on contestable criteria (e.g. total mileage), rather than naming particular operators.		
7	If there are any exemptions, these should be clearly defined with objective criteria (so they can be applied appropriately)	Exemptions are listed and are in line with DfT guidance on EP Schemes.	No action required

Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride			
	Points raised by consultee	Initial response from Bus Partnership	Proposed action
1	No issues raised. Document well presented.	Welcome the support for the EP.	No action required

West Mercia Police			
	Points raised by consultee	Initial response from Bus Partnership	Proposed action
1	Would wish to be involved in any proposals for new infrastructure, such as bus stations, to consider potential anti-social behaviour issues.	Noted	The Police will be invited to discuss any proposals where personal safety or anti-social behaviour issues might arise.
2	Support enhanced bus provision, in that it could reduce other traffic and contribute to safer roads.	Welcome the support for the EP.	No action required

Office of the Traffic Commissioner			
	Points raised by consultee	Initial response from Bus Partnership	Proposed action
1	Acknowledged receipt of document.	Noted	No action required